

Warrant Committee FY06 Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2006
7:30 p.m. Chenery Middle school, Community Room

Handout(s) distributed tonight are:

1. Letter from Chair of the Capital Budget Committee
2. Revised 5-year projection dated 3-1-06
3. Definitions of core town services

Member(s) absent: Paolillo, Oates

Also present: Town Accountant Barbara Hagg, Town Administrator Thomas Younger, Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti and Town Treasurer Floyd Carman

WC Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Minutes of 2/15/06 – Accepted after several changes

Initial Report from Capital Budget Committee

Member Bruschi who is also Chair of the Capital Budget Committee has a handout in the packet that explains the purpose, concerns, and goals of the Capital Budget Committee. The Committee would like the threshold level for request for capital non-recurring threshold to be incorporated into the policy next year. There have been items included in the capital budget requests that look very much like maintenance items. The School Department is requesting a maintenance shed at the Wellington be replaced for \$1M is also being requested as well as the completion of the HVAC replacement at the HS. Both reach of the level of "extra capital" that should go a different route. Telephone conversions are coming in at dribs and drabs and the suggestion is being made that the entire project including buildings not requested be all coordinated into one large project. Total requests are \$5.7M without roads. Taking out the shed and HVAC units there remains \$3.7M. Another \$375K are maintenance items that should logically be included in operating budgets (painting, life safety, sidewalk at the library, etc.). Another category of \$500K that at this point does not look as recommended funding. This may change since the Committee has not yet met with those Department heads. Another item is the \$700K for software that has been requested to be funded by a borrowing. There is a remainder of \$2.5M in categories (1-3) that so far look likely to be recommended. There is only \$1M available for the capital budget. Once all items are vetted, the detail will be presented to the Warrant Committee. Homer Building items that were not done as part of the Homer project should also be in the operating budget. The maintenance at the High School is currently in an old shop area and

School Chair Gibson stated that the feasibility study committee recommended that this be moved to a free standing facility and out of the High School. This would not be a request in FY07 but for future years.

Core Services

Chair Jones presented a handout that included services that the town currently provides, whether those are required by statute, are they core services, is it possible to outsource and finally can we charge user fees. The non core functions are trash collection, community development, town engineer, library, and recreation. The senior center and youth commission although not listed are non core services. There are some functions that are core but not all services provided under those functions are core: EMS in fire, some police services. Member Wider as an exercise added up the non core function & this totaled \$3M or less than 5% of the budget. Even if we were to cut all non core services in the current year, the gap would open up again next year to the same level. Member Callanan stated that during the budget discussions, departments had been asked what kinds of things they are doing that could fall into the category of non-core services. We could identify those items. We should also continue a community discussion of what level of services the community is interested in supporting. Clayton Christenson did such a report in 1996. BOS Chair Solomon stated that the Vision Committee had done a survey five years ago that identified what the community rated as most important. Member Doblin stated that outsourcing of core services at a lower cost should be considered. Member Allison stated that there is some duplication of services such as youth services, school department and recreation. Breaking these overlaps out by function could be helpful and identifying the reasons for departmental breakouts if any.

Projection of costs for 5 years

Robie White presented the latest worksheet that has been prepared showing that even with the \$3M Road override in FY07, we again face a FY08 budget shortfall of \$3.2M and in FY09 \$5M deficit that includes the new debt service for the Wellington. There is an average increase of 9% over the next three years. BOS Chair Solomon stated that the presentation made by Selectmen Brownsberger used a 7% average. The assumptions were somewhat different in that it was assumed that the health care would stabilize and salary increases would be held to 3%. Member Tillotson stated that we need to keep in mind that the Library and High School will be in FY12, the interest rates are much higher, and the cost of capital projects are growing at a rate higher than inflation.

Consolidation of Building maintenance

This will be delayed until next week.

Other

BOS Chair stated that the BOS recognizes that there is only three weeks until the override vote for roads and a fact sheet needs to be distributed to the public. He asks that two member of the WC volunteer to work with the BOS on this fact sheet. It is important that there be some informed discussion being made available to townspeople. This communication would be put into the newspaper. Members Heigham and Hobbs volunteered for the Committee.

Education Subcommittee report

The Committee met this week to discuss the school department budget. This Saturday morning the BOS will be meeting with the School Committee. The Subcommittee wants to review the revolving accounts that the school has and there will be another meeting by the Subcommittee to clarify outstanding issues. This meeting will be within the next week. Members Doblin and Callanan are the only members of the Subcommittee that will be able to attend the Saturday meeting. There was a plea to postpone the meeting. BOS Chair Solomon feels that the time frame is short and that it will be difficult to reschedule. He feels that this information gathering is important and no final decisions will be made at that time. This meeting will be televised. The proposed tiers for restoration has not yet been reviewed by the School Committee and School Committee Chair will be making these draft tiers available on Saturday morning. Member Callanan feels that the tiers are crucial and asks that the tiers be finalized by the school department in the future before the Saturday morning meeting.

Executive Session

At 8:40 there was a motion by Member Curtis seconded by School Committee Chair Gibson to enter executive session to discuss negotiations. The meeting would be adjourned after the Executive Session. There was a roll call of each member present as to whether they want to enter executive session. Unanimous

The Mega Meeting will be on March 6th at 7:00 p.m. at the CMS. This is a combined meeting of the Permanent Building Committee, Capital Budget Committee, Warrant Committee, School Committee, and Board of Selectmen. DPW Building and Design for the Wellington School will be

discussed as well as the overall capital needs. The goal is to be complete by 10:00 p.m. If we have to, it will be continued to Wednesday 3/8/06.

Motion to come out of Executive Session and adjourn at 9:15 p.m. by Member Heigham.